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ED 011 139 EA 000 343

AN ANALYSIS OF INTERACTION AMONG PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS DURING SCHOOL FACULTY MEETINGS.

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PUB DATE FEB 67

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.09 HC-$0.36 9P.

DESCRIPTORS- *PRINCIPALS, BEHAVIOR PATTERNS, *TEACHERS, *TEACHER ADMINISTRATOR RELATIONSHIP, *STAFF MEETINGS, PARTICIPATION, *INTERACTION PROCESS ANALYSIS, CRISPIN SYSTEM OF INTERACTION ANALYSIS, NEW YORK CITY

A PRINCIPAL'S INTERACTION PATTERN IN FACULTY MEETINGS, TESTED BY THE CRISPIN SYSTEM OF INTERACTION ANALYSIS WAS HYPOTHESIZED TO BE THE MAJOR CAUSE FOR INTERSCHOOL TEACHER ATTITUDE DIFFERENCES. THE AUTHORS FURTHER HYPOTHESIZED THAT THE MORE INDIRECT THE PRINCIPAL'S BEHAVIOR (WILLINGLY SHARES HIS AUTHORITY WITH TEACHERS), THE MORE SUPPORTIVE WILL BE THE TEACHERS' BEHAVIOR (WILLINGLY COOPERATIVE). PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOR WAS RECORDED AS DIRECT (USES AUTHORITY) OR INDIRECT (SHARES AUTHORITY), AND TEACHER BEHAVIOR WAS RECORDED AS NONSUPPORTIVE (PERFUNCTORY) OR SUPPORTIVE (WILLINGLY COOPERATIVE). THE DATA REPRESENTING OVER 20,000 INTERACTIONS IN 30 ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FACULTY MEETINGS INDICATED A REJECTION OF THE STATED HYPOTHESIS. TEACHERS TENDED TO BE SUPPORTIVE IRRESPECTIVE OF DIRECT AND INDIRECT PRINCIPAL BEHAVIOR. THE AMOUNT OF TEACHER PARTICIPATION WAS, HOWEVER, EXACTLY TWICE AS HIGH IN THE INDIRECT CLIMATES. THE CONSISTENT TEACHER REACTION TO THE VARYING BEHAVIOR OF PRINCIPALS WAS AT VARIANCE WITH FINDINGS IN OTHER DISCIPLINES WHERE THE BEHAVIOR OF A GROUP WAS DEPENDENT UPON THE BEHAVIOR OF THE LEADER. FURTHER RESEARCH WAS SUGGESTED USING SECONDARY AND LARGER URBAN SCHOOLS, DIFFERENT BEHAVIOR PATTERNS BY THE SAME PRINCIPALS, AND THE ATTITUDES AND THE BEHAVIORS OF TEACHERS AND PRINCIPALS. THIS PAPER WAS PRESENTED AT THE AMERICAN EDUCATION RESEARCH ASSOCIATION CONVENTION (NEW YORK, FEBRUARY 1967). (GB)

ED011139

AN ANALYSIS OF INTERACTION AMONG PRINCIPALS AND TEACHERS DURING SCHOOL FACULTY MEETINGS*

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Reporting their research on the attitudes of teachers toward faculty meetings, Blumberg and Amidon write in THE NASSP BULLETIN (1): "---the critical variable accounting for differences in teacher attitudes from school to school seems to be the principal's behavior as reflected in the pattern of faculty meeting interaction---" and, "more positive attitudes are associated with faculty-centered interaction (the locus of responsibility and control being with the faculty); more negative attitudes are related to principal-centered interaction (the locus of responsibility and control resting with the principal)." This pilot study aims to gather more information regarding principal-teacher interaction during school faculty meetings. But where Blumberg and Amidon used the questionnaire method of data collection, the present study employs trained observers using interaction-analysis to observe and record the live behaviors of principals and teachers as they occur spontaneously during faculty meetings.

Blumberg and Amidon offer a useful conceptual dichotomy--they classify principal-teacher interaction as either "principal-centered" or "faculty-centered"; the difference being found in "---the locus of responsibility and control." And this difference can be set forth in behavioral terms--when the principal behaves in such a way as to maintain responsibility and control, his behavior can be described as Direct; when he behaves in such a way as to share responsibility and control his behavior can be described as Indirect.

Teachers' behaviors can be dichotomized also, and in this study all teacher behavior is categorized as Supportive or Non-Supportive. While "behavior" and "attitude" have different meanings, this research accepts the assumption that attitudes are reflected in behavior; and it seems safe to generalize from Blumberg and Amidon's "positive" and "negative" attitudes to our definitions of Supportive and Non-Supportive behaviors respectively.

Blumberg and Amidon found more positive attitudes (teachers') associated with faculty-centered interaction. Expecting to find data supporting their findings we used our operational concepts to restate their conclusion as our hypothesis.

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*Presented at the A.E.R.A. Convention, New York, N. Y., February, 1967.

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Hypothesis: The more indirect the principal's behavior, the more supportive will be the teachers' behaviors.

Operational Definitions:

Behavior - oral statements, and the manner in which statements are made including tone of voice and facial expression.

Direct Behavior (Principal) - the principal uses his authority, states his or the administration's position, ideas, or requirements - gives orders, directions - lectures, reads prepared directives or statements of policy - justifies his position or authority.

Indirect Behavior (Principal) - the principal willingly shares his authority with the teachers - shares and accepts both feelings and ideas - seems genuinely willing to be influenced by the teachers - encourages them to express themselves, aims for consensus.

Non-Supportive Behavior (teachers) - the teacher seems to be participating only because he has to - he is defensive, uncooperative - he seems bored, unattentive, uninterested - he is perfunctory, seems to be behaving simply to get rid of the task.

Supportive Behavior (teacher) - the teacher seems willingly cooperative - spontaneously, enthusiastically contributes feelings and ideas - he is attentively, seriously involved.

Independent Variable - the behaviors of the principals.

Dependent Variable - the behaviors of the teachers.

Controls - all faculty meetings were held after school and lasted 40-50 minutes. All principals and teachers discussed the topic, "Utilization of Teacher Time." All the schools are elementary and are located in the Wabash Valley, Indiana. Faculty size ranged from five to twenty-three and averaged eleven (our data revealed no correlation between group size and either of the variables).

Procedures: Graduate students selected from a graduate course in interaction analysis at Indiana State University were trained intensively by the use of films and T-V tapes and live observing experiences until they achieved the level of .95 reliability in recording the categories. Behaviors were recorded sequentially as they occurred every three seconds or faster in case of change of speaker or behavior. Principals' behaviors were recorded with 1's; teachers', with o's. Direct (Principal) behaviors and Non-Supportive (teacher) behaviors were placed at the right of the column; Indirect (Principal) and Supportive (teacher) behaviors, at the left. So that the record would not be distorted by a situation wherein one or two "supportive" teachers did most of the talking while the rest of the group was non-supportive, etc., a "G-factor" was recorded. "G" refers to group and is recorded as the observer's estimate of the supportiveness or non-supportiveness of the total group. When the G appears on the right of the column the observer found the group to be non-supportive; on the left, supportive. The days for the

faculty meetings were randomly selected. When possible the observers were randomly assigned; however, the observers' class schedules determined their availability. When observers returned from a faculty meeting and presented their raw data, the meeting was discussed. For example, although all the principals did use the topic "Utilization of Teacher Time," at some faculty meetings things occurred such as committee reports, and readings of minutes, etc., and in one case even a brief birthday party; and such events were not included in the data for analysis. The raw data was then resolved into I/D's and S/N's:

$I/D = \frac{\text{Indirect}}{\text{Direct}}$ (Principal behavior) so that the more indirect the principal's behavior the higher his I/D ratio.

$S/N = \frac{\text{Supportive}}{\text{Non-Supportive}}$ (teacher behaviors) so that the more supportive the teachers' behaviors the higher the S/N ratio.

G factors were also totaled and are reported as G-S when the group was supportive during half or more than half of the total interactions; and, as G-N where the group was non-supportive half or more than half of the time. Therefore the interaction can be analyzed in terms of our hypothesis, and if our hypothesis is supported by the data we should find a high I/D accompanied by a high S/N and a Supportive G.

Findings: Our findings are set forth in Table I.

TABLE I

Faculty Meeting	Principal's I/D (Ranked)	Teachers' S/N (Acts of Individuals)	Group (%)**
1	17.00	464.00	S-(100)
2	13.00	8.19	S-(71)
3*	10.18	51.33	S-(94)
4*	7.20	23.60	S-(90)
5	7.07	116.00	S-(99)
6	6.05	10.90	S-(81)
7	5.43	364.00	S-(100)
8	4.43	11.88	S-(93)
9	4.41	34.20	S-(97)
10*	3.79	67.33	S-(98)
11	3.62	438.00	S-(100)
12*	3.04	13.22	S-(92)
13	2.33	243.00	S-(100)
14*	2.09	516.00	S-(100)
15	1.53	18.75	S-(86)
16	1.32	37.20	S-(96)
17*	1.10	379.00	S-(100)
18*	.83	7.53	S-(80)
19	.77	30.00	S-(98)
20	.73	15.00	S-(83)
21	.59	161.00	S-(100)
22	.50	149.00	S-(100)
23	.49	19.20	S-(95)
24	.45	9.95	S-(88)
25	.39	203.00	S-(100)
26	.27	146.00	S-(97)
27	.25	2.55	N-(41)
28	.08	14.27	S-(86)
29	.08	3.00	S-(63)
30	.04	10.00	S-(100)

* = Female ** = % of total time group was Supportive

This data represents over 20,000 interactions among thirty principals and 311 teachers during thirty faculty meetings covering 1,350 minutes and it indicates that our hypothesis is rejected. There is no correlation between I/D's and S/N's--these findings would occur by chance ($r = .229$ - Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient). According to our definition of supportiveness, these teachers were very supportive nearly all the time regardless of the directness or indirectness of the principals. And this is shown more clearly if we extract from Table I the data representing the nine faculty meetings in which the teachers were supportive all the time:

Table II

Faculty Meetings During Which Teachers Were 100% Supportive

Faculty Meeting	Principal's I/D
1	17.00
7	5.43
11	3.62
13	2.33
(Median) 14	2.09
17	1.10
21	.59
22	.50
30	.04

Here we find that of the nine faculty meetings evincing 100% supportiveness, five are above and four are below the median of principals' I/D's. Perhaps the most striking piece of evidence is that teachers behaved 100% supportively with both the principal with the highest I/D (17.00) and the principal with the lowest I/D (.04)!

In addition to the data discussed, we found other data relevant to our hypothesis; that is, the amount of participation by the teachers in the two different climates. The teachers who interacted with principals whose patterns of behavior were indirect participated exactly twice as much as teachers in the direct climates. If we assign "direct climate" to those faculty meetings in which the principals' I/D's were 1.10 or lower, and "indirect climate" to those with I/D's higher than 1.10 we find:

Climate -	Direct	Indirect
Average number of teacher behaviors -	79	158

It is also interesting to note that of the thirty principals observed seven are females; and of the seven females, six behaved indirectly (I/D= 1.10 or higher) and the remaining one had an I/D of .83. Of course, this also means that the widest range of behavioral patterns was found among male principals - our experience leads us to suggest that an I/D of 17 reveals an extremely indirect pattern; and an I/D of .04, an extremely direct pattern of behavior.

Conclusions: The evidence gathered in this pilot study suggests that the behaviors of teachers during faculty meetings are consistently supportive regardless of the directness or indirectness of the principal's behaviors. However, teachers participate more (twice as much) in the indirect climate.

Our findings are puzzling. Research findings in the areas of group dynamics, sociology and leadership, too numerous to mention, suggest that the behavior of the group is dependent upon the behavior of the leader (and this was revealed in our data regarding the amount of participation). How explain our findings, then? Two explanations seem reasonable: (1) Observers cannot accurately categorize behavior, especially tacit behavior--he seems to be interested, but is he, really? (2) Teachers are mature enough to hide their feelings and not behave in ways likely to jeopardize their positions. After all, faculty meetings are recognized as part of a teacher's professional role and teachers are expected to behave "professionally" during faculty meetings. This implies that they might pretend to be interested, act as though they are concerned, even when they aren't. And perhaps this best explains our findings. Even if we allow that what our trained observers recorded as Supportive behavior really wasn't Supportive, whatever that behavior was and however it might be recorded the fact remains that the behaviors of these teachers during these faculty meetings remained very much the same regardless of the behaviors of the principals which varied greatly. (As many as seven of these observations were done by the same person.)

In the article cited above Blumberg and Amidon go on to say, "Generally, there is a very consistent trend for principals to perceive what transpires in their faculty meetings differently than do teachers." And later, "It may be precisely because of these allitudinal differences that principals and teachers experience some of the conflicts they do." Perhaps the findings of the present research shed new light on this "conflict" - "difference in perception" problem. Could it simply be that from the principal's point of view during faculty meetings it appears that the teachers are satisfied with the meeting? That they do seem to be behaving "supportively"? If they do seem to be supportive, and if their behaviors are not in keeping with their attitudes or feelings, surely here is a cause of the "conflict" and "difference in perception" reported by Blumberg and Amidon.

Implications for Further Research: Research should be designed to gather data regarding both the attitudes and the behaviors of both teachers and principals during faculty meetings. And it seems appropriate to use both interaction-analysis and post-session questionnaires.

Principals can be trained in interaction-analysis and many would be willing to try out different patterns of behavior during faculty meetings. The effects of different patterns of leadership upon the behaviors and attitudes of the teachers could be ascertained with interaction-analysis and questionnaires.

Research as suggested should be done in secondary schools and in larger urban schools (this research was carried out in small elementary schools about half of which are in small towns and half in Terre Haute, Indiana - pop. = 70,000)

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1 - Blumberg, Arthur and Amidon, Edmund, A COMPARISON OF TEACHER AND PRINCIPAL ATTITUDES TOWARD FACULTY MEETINGS: The NASSP BULLETIN, March, 1964.

N.B. - Copies of "The Crispin System of Interaction Analysis" may be obtained by writing to David Crispin, Assistant Professor of Education, Department of Education and Psychology, Indiana State University, Terre Haute, Indiana.